

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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 (FOR KEY SEE REVERSE)

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1. Press reports on the rioting in the French Cameroons in May 1955
2. Attachments are unclassified when detached from this coversheet.

Attachments (7 pages in English, translation, and 4 pages in French)

Distribution of Attachment:
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25X1

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Attachment I

TRANSLATION

RADIO PRESSE, Organe d'Information du Cameroun

Published by the Administration, Service d'Information, Yaounde

Number 1272, 27 May 1955

The Disorders Fomented by the UPC

CAIM HAS BEEN REESTABLISHED EVERYWHERE

Powerful Forces for Maintenance of Order are on the Spot

Curfew is still maintained today, 27 May

The movement of agitation started several months ago by UPC has just reached its climax. Douala and the Mungo Region were the theater of violent incidents provoked, outside the bounds of all claims of a social and political nature, by the program of rabble rousing of Communist agitators.

At Douala, during the day of 25 May there were incidents marked by the attempts of manifestants to take possession of the prison. Seditious groups gathered in various quarters and had to be dispersed by force. Europeans moving about the city in cars, or coming out of curiosity to the scene of the disorders were attacked. Curfew, declared during the evening, was observed without incident.

This morning the systematic search of the Bassa quarter, from whence the outbreak got its start, brought about the arrest of forty individuals found to be in possession of machettes, knives, cudgels, among them the leader of armed groups of the UPC of the quarter. The responsible persons of UPC seem to have been outdone by their troops and are in flight.

There has been a declaration of the existence of armed groups and rebellion. Important forces for the maintenance of order are on the spot.

In the Mungo region, where the first troubles broke out at Mbanga as a result of an inflammatory speech of the President of UPC, Moussie (sic) FELIX, the agitation spread to Loum and Nkongsamba. Order was reestablished in these three localities after violent demonstrations. The forces for the maintenance of order are sufficient for the job.

As a whole, for the regions which form the theater of action, the toll has been established at six dead and six wounded. The guard of the forces for order (un garde du service d'ordre) from Mbanga, and five manifestants from Douala. About fifty wounded had to be hospitalized.

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Participating in these disorders were only the troops (sic) of UPC, brought to fanatical pitch by the leaders who wanted at any price to get back their authority, compromised by a series of spectacular checks to their power. The population remains perfectly calm and in several areas cheered the forces which arrived to put a stop to the terror and violence. Confirming the failure of past Communist attempts ~~in~~ in union (syndical) matters, the workers failed to back the UPC: all public services and private enterprises are functioning normally.

INCIDENTS AT YAOUNDE

An incident broke out Thursday morning, 26 May, at the market of Yaounde between Bameleke merchants belonging to opposing union factions. The services of public order maintenance made several arrests. Some demonstrators then carried their assault to the central Commissariat of Police to attempt to liberate these arrested.

During the scuffle which resulted, there was one death among the curious and two or three wounded. Legal investigations were immediately initiated. The curfew, proclaimed to prepare for any eventuality, was observed without incident.

This morning manifestations were foisted at Yaounde. The public order services had to break up a column of manifestants which was marching on the center of the city. Two deaths and several wounded persons are to be regretted.

Important public order forces have arrived at Yaounde from A.E.F. by plane.

Curfew will be enforced tonight at 1900 hours until 0600 hours.

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ATTACHMENT II

TRANSLATION

FRANCE-EQUATEUR, 28 May 1955

THE INCIDENTS AT DOUALA

Douala -

reached Yaounde, the incidents at Douala on 23 and 24 May broke out on the occasion of a meeting held in the populated quarter of this city by adherents of Rassemblement Democratique Africain (RDA).

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A violent riot was provoked by members of the UPC (Union des Populations du Cameroun), the Communist line party which considers Douala its political fief. The Police force had to intervene and make arrests. Aroused by the militants of the UPC, troublemaking elements of the population, some of whom were carrying firearms, attacked the commissariat of police and the prison.

Forces for the maintenance of order quickly got the situation in hand. Considering the turn taken by the incidents, some agitators of UPC fled from Douala and took refuge in neighboring regions, where they alarmed the population with false reports. As a precaution to prepare for any eventuality, reinforcements came in from neighboring territories, being brought in by plane.

The population, it should be added, remained perfectly calm. All services and private enterprises are functioning normally.

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ATTACHMENT II

TRANSLATION

FRANCE-EQUATEUR, 26 May 1955

THE INCIDENTS AT DOUALA

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25X1 Douala - [redacted] have reached Yaounde, the incidents at Douala on 23 and 24 May broke out on the occasion of a meeting held in the populated quarter of this city by adherents of Rassemblement Democratique Africain (RDA).

A violent riot was provoked by members of the UFC (Union des Populations du Cameroun), the Communist line party which considers Douala its political fief. The Police force had to intervene and make arrests. Aroused by the militants of the UFC, troublemaking elements of the population, some of whom were carrying firearms, attacked the commissariat of police and the prison.

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ATTACHMENT III

TRANSLATION

FRANCE-EQUATEUR, 28 May 1955

Editorial on the front page:

WHAT IS GOING ON AT DOUALA?

Travellers arriving from Douala make it easy for us to believe that ~~these~~ trouble has broken out in the Cameroons.

With the lack of detail which goes with distance, numbers sometimes are raised and, if certain people name a figure of 200 dead there is the possibility of exaggeration.

Several Europeans may be among the victims and a curfew is said to have been put into effect at Douala, where the authorities are said to have quickly restored order.

At the root of the riots is said to be the UPC (Union des Populations du Cameroun), which, on the occasion of labor conflict, is said to have tried to bring pressure on the workers hostile to the idea of a strike.

We hardly know anything beyond this, the news being fairly confused. But the facts appear to be, unfortunately, as reported.

How can such events occur immediately after the harmony which showed up on 15 May, at the opening of the Wouri Bridge?

How is it that Mr. TEITGEN was not informed of the situation or the state of mind of the Cameroons, so as not to make a speech which now makes a false note?

Has there not been, since the departure of Mr. SOUCADAUX, a clear desire on the part of the Rue Oudinot to give the levers of control over to functionaries chosen more for their experience outside the Cameroons than for their familiarity with the country?

Is it not time to revise such a conception and to investigate to see if there are not, somewhere in Africa, administrators of high rank who know well the neighbor Territory, and might well have a different outlook, and probably a better one, as to the measures to be adopted to bring back calm and prosperity.

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Our opinion in the matter would perhaps not be listened to in Paris. But we are in the front seats, it would be best to take this into account.

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Attachment IV

COPY

RADIO PRESSE, Organe d'Information du Cameroun

Published by the Administration, Service d'INformation, Yaounde

Numero 1273, 1 June 1955

APRES LES DESORDRES FOMENTES PAR L'U.P.C.

IL FAUT ACHEVER D'APAISER LES ESPRITS

COMME A DOUALA, LE COUVRE-FEU EST LEVE A YAOUNDE DEPUIS MARDI

A DOUALA

Un incendie a éclaté dans la nuit du 26 au 27 mai à Douala, à 22 heures (locale), au siège de la permanence du parti U.P.C. dans le quartier africain de New Bell.

Cet incendie allumé par les partisans de l'U.P.C. qui auraient, semble-t-il invité les habitants à quitter leurs paillotes, ravagea rapidement le lieu-dit Komando, soit une trentaine de cases, avant que les pompiers et les pelotons de gendarmes, accourus immédiatement, puissent intervenir. On ne déplore aucune victime.

Les toits en nattes des cases rapprochées de ce village resserré, sans voie de pénétration, brulaient comme des torches. Le quartier avait été déserté sans doute sur consignes par l'ensemble de ses habitants. Seuls une vingtaine d'Africains furent surpris par l'incendie mais purent déménager sous les flammèches leur mobilier.

Le Haut-Commissaire se rendit aussitôt sur les lieux où devaient être arrêtés par une patrouille surveillant la voie ferrée proche, trois suspects tapis dans les hautes herbes voisines.

Les rumeurs les plus fantaisistes ayant circulé sur l'Emeute de Douala, on précise que le nombre des victimes s'élève à une dizaine dont deux Europeans, MM. Dol et Zimmerman, une vingtaine de véhicules ont été endommagés dont six incendiés.

Au plus fort de l'éméute 2.000 individus environ y ont pris part sur une population totale de 100.000 âmes. Encore s'agissait-il uniquement des éléments douteux d'origine Bamileke et Bassa, surexcités par les leaders de l'U.P.C. qui ont du reste pris la fuite dès les 26 et 27 mai. Des mandats d'arrêt ont été lancés contre les principaux responsables. Trois d'entre eux, parmi les plus importants, ont déjà été arrêtés.

A Douala, le 1er Juillet 1955. CIA-RDP83-00418R000800040007-8

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d'une part, leur faire le bilan des événements des derniers jours dans tout le Cameroun et, d'autre part, leur demander de contribuer à l'apaisement des esprits.

Devant 200 auditeurs qui représentaient toute la population de New-Bell, Mr. Roland Pré, qu'accompagnait notamment le député Douala Manga Bell, a bien précisé que seuls les quelques vrais responsables des troubles seraient l'objet de poursuites judiciaires.

Le plan de réformes administratives et d'urbanisme déjà entrepris serait poursuivi.

À NGAMBE

À Ngambé, près d'Edea, le président du mouvement de l'Evolution sociale camerounaise et quelques-uns de ses amis furent agressés à coups de fusil par le leader de l'U.P.C. Kingué Abel, actuellement en fuite.

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ATTACHMENT V

COPY

RADIO PRESSE, Organe d'Information du Cameroun
Published by the Administration, Service d'Information, Yaounde

Numero 1273, 1 juin 1955

"ON NE CONSTRUIT PAS UN PAYS DANS LA VIOLENCE"

déclare le Haut-Commissaire

"Je demande à tous, de quelque horizon qu'ils viennent, de ne pas servir des événements, qui viennent de troubler le Cameroun à des fins politiques ou personnelles. C'est en écartant toute préoccupation de ce genre que nos efforts pour assurer définitivement l'apaisement des esprits seront les plus efficaces", déclara notamment ce jour au représentant de l'A.F.P., le Haut-Commissaire Roland Pré et, poursuivant: "Dès maintenant le calme est d'ailleurs partout revenu dans le Territoire."

A la question lui demandant ce qu'il pensait des récents événements, le Haut-Commissaire répondit:

"Il s'est agi en fait d'une tentative d'émeute généralisée, organisée sciemment dans la partie du Territoire où l'U.P.C. a implanté ses comités de base: Mungo, Douala, Sanaga-Maritime, Yaoundé. Cette tentative fut préparée par une campagne systématique de fausses nouvelles selon lesquelles l'Administration saccageait les villages, incendiait les quartiers africains et tuait ou blessait les Camerounais. Cette campagne d'excitation fut développée partout sur les mêmes thèmes.

"Avant d'en venir à cette épreuve de force, nos adversaires communistes avaient déjà essayé une campagne d'agitation sociale qui atteignit son point culminant avec les deux tentatives de grève des fonctionnaires et des travailleurs du bâtiment, cette dernière destinée à empêcher la conclusion de conventions collectives et la création d'un climat social détendu.

"Leurs échecs répétés sur ce plan social devaient les déterminer à tenter l'aventure de l'émeute."

Le Haut-Commissaire précise alors que cette explosion de violence avait été tout d'abord machinée pour le passage du ministre de la France d'outre-mer, mais que les agitateurs reculèrent alors devant la volonté éclatante manifestée par l'ensemble de la population de fêter l'amitié franco-camerounaise à l'occasion de l'inauguration du pont sur le Wouri, grande étape de l'équipement de ce pays. L'U.P.C. remit donc ses projets à plus tard. Les documents saisis sur les émeutiers prouvent que les désordres furent précédemment préparés de huit jours et déclenchés à l'heure voulue par le guet-apens de Mbanga dont un gendarme européen et un garde camerounais furent les premières victimes.

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Constatant alors que le mal fait au Cameroun était cependant monstre que la criminelle détermination des meneurs aurait pu le faire craindre, Le Haut-Commissaire déclara:

"Nous devons tous conjuguer nos efforts pour faire revenir le calme. Une partie infime de la population a participé aux troubles. Seuls les dirigeants de l'U.P.C., les seuls vrais coupables, seront poursuivis. Quant à ceux qui se sont laissé simplement égarer par une propagande de mensonges et de violences verbales, nous leur tendons la main, car il furent trompés plus que coupables. Que chacun se souvienne que ce n'est pas dans la violence que se construit un pays mais dans l'amour de ses concitoyens et le respect des personnes.

"Plus que jamais, poursuivit avec force M. Roland Pré, notre objectif, comme le ministre Teitgen l'a encore affirmé, est de donner à tous les Camerounais la possibilité de participer à la gestion des affaires publiques, de doter le Territoire des institutions de base qui leur permettront de s'exprimer et de prendre leurs responsabilités afin qu'aucune énergie ne se laisse séduire par les violences de langage et les oppositions stériles."

En terminant, le Haut-Commissaire rendit hommage au sang-froid et au dévouement de tous les fonctionnaires du Cameroun, administrateurs et service d'ordre particulièrement. Il dit enfin combien la raison et le calme dont firent preuve l'ensemble des représentants de la population, parlementaires, conseillers territoriaux, conseillers municipaux, chefs de quartier, leur détermination d'oublier devant ces événements toutes rivalités, avaient contribué à lui faciliter la tâche.

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ATTACHMENT VI

TRANSLATION

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE INFORMATION BULLETIN, 1 June 1955

INCIDENTS IN THE CAMEROON

Disorders Provoked by the U.P.C. Resulted in 20 Deaths and 80 Wounded

DOUALA, June 1 - About 20 dead, of whom 2 were Europeans, 80 wounded, of whom 3 were Europeans, and many arrests are the results of 5 days of disorder in the Cameroon.

An incident which occurred Sunday last (May 22) at M'Benga started the trouble when a gendarmerie patrol was overtaken by numbers of people who attended a meeting of the U.P.C. (Communist) which was marked by an inflammatory speech of the president of the U.P.C. During the scuffle, a European gendarme and several African soldiers were seriously wounded. One of them died as a result of his injuries. This incident was like a trickle of oil spreading throughout the area known as the "Fertile Crescent", which comprises the countries Mongo, Douala, Edea and Yaounde.

Several places became gradually theaters of violent outbreaks, excited in the villages by committees of the U.P.C. and in the cities by the workers' syndicates of the C.G.T. Monday night at Douala a meeting of the R.D.A. was disturbed by partisans of the U.P.C. who transformed the meeting into an open fight.

The Prison of Newbell Attacked

But it was Tuesday when disorders of the gravest sort were provoked. Police posts in Newbell, the African quarter of Douala, were attacked simultaneously by rioters armed with sticks and machetes. At the end of the afternoon, a prison in the same quarter was attacked. Police, in order to disengage themselves, were obliged to have resort to arms, killing 5 rioters and wounding many others. A captain of the gendarmerie was wounded by the discharge of a shotgun by a rioter.

During this time in the entire African city of 100,000 inhabitants, European cars were attacked and stoned. Sixteen cars were burned and their occupants molested and injured by machetes. Several Europeans were wounded, 2 of them seriously. One of these, M. Dol, died in the hospital.

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The rioters were not satisfied with this. The following morning about a thousand of them, led by the U.P.C., tried to get through a police barricade in order to go into town. A clash ensued, during the course of which 2 of the rioters were killed and 10 wounded. A curfew was then decreed.

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Thursday at Yaounde an altercation between shopkeepers was quickly exploited by agitators who continued to spread alarming rumors provoking wildly excited groups of people.

The High Commissioner of the Cameroon, then in Douala, in the face of the wide extension of these troubles called for numerous reinforcements of troops and gendarmerie, which were brought from F.E.A. by planes belonging to private companies which were requisitioned for the purpose.

Fire at the U.P.C. Headquarters in Douala

On the night of May 28, a fire broke out in the headquarters of the U.P.C. An inquiry has established that the fire was caused by U.P.C. members. A fifth of the African quarter of Newbell, where the headquarters were situated, was destroyed. Two hundred houses were burned before the fire department could intervene. As soon as the fire broke out in the headquarters, the native quarter was deserted and almost all of the inhabitants, it is believed, were put on notice by members of the U.P.C. Only about 20 Africans were surprised by the fire, but they were able to get out of their houses before they were completely destroyed. A patrol then guarding the railroad nearby arrested 3 suspects.

Order is Today Established in Douala and in the Whole of the Cameroon

In Douala and in the Cameroons, order is being restored slowly. Movie houses have reopened their doors. The streets of the African quarter of Douala, traditionally lively and colorful, have this morning assumed their traditional aspect, and no longer does one see wide streets of houses with their blinds closed and patrolled by military police fully armed. The functionaries of the Administration can for the first time since the beginning of the incidents circulate individually in these quarters.

All Other Political Parties in the Cameroon Have Disavowed the Violence of the U.P.C.

It is learned that various elements of the parties "Independants Camerounais", "Evolution Sociale Camerounaise" (with a tendency toward the S.F.I.O.), the "Bloc Democratique Camerounais" (the party of M. Aujoulat), have expressed the desire to form a national front, grouping those parties together who disavow the violence and systematic anti-European attitude of the U.P.C.

Origin of the Troubles

In the European and African responsible circles it is reported that the series of incidents of these last few days in the Cameroon is the result of

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ATTACHMENT VI
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a campaign of agitation carried on during the past 4 months by the U.P.C. This agitation was intensified during the recent visit of the Minister of Overseas Territories from Paris and was scheduled to have reached its height during the forthcoming visit of the Trusteeship Mission of the U.N. The U.P.C. and its affiliates -- C.G.T., the Union of Cameroon Women, and the Democratic Organization of Cameroon Youth -- are organized along the lines of Communist organizations: they comprise a central political bureau, village committees and action committees of syndicates in urban centers. Sixty committees existed in Newbell, the African quarter of Douala.

It is generally considered that the extension of the campaign of agitation was designed to be a reply to the vast political reform recently undertaken in the territory and capable of cutting the grass from under the feet of the principal objectives of the U.P.C.

The High Commissioner, M. Roland PRE, stated to the press that the organization of rural bodies destined to enlarge popular participation in local administration, the recent conclusion of a collective bargaining arrangement among those in the building trade, as well as the settlement of the conflict among local functionaries, has resulted in a weakening of the position of the U.P.C. This party has tried to play upon the sentiments of the population, taking as a pretext any occasion to organize meetings and formulate violent and extreme demands, going so far as to accuse the High Commissioner and the local administration of "cannibalism."

Gendarmerie and troops are at present spread out in sufficient number in the territory. The High Commissioner has the situation in hand. It is believed that several leaders of the U.P.C., notably Ruben NYOMBE, have fled and found refuge in Nigeria.

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